

ORGANIC CERTIFICATION FACT SHEET

What are Preventative Practices?

Preventative practices are techniques that help you avoid crop pest, weed, and disease problems on your organic farm. Preventative practices are required prior to the use of any material input.

USDA organic regulations require that producers use a multi-step approach in dealing with crop pest, weed, and disease problems (7CFR 205.206).

An organic producer must be able to demonstrate, through records and observable practices, that they implemented each level before the use of any approved materials to control pests, weeds and diseases. **7CFR §205.206**

Consistent observation and monitoring of fields and storage areas is important to ensure that potential issues are recorded and action is taken before a problem arises.

Step 1 — Prevention of the problem through crop rotation, soil management, sanitation, and cultural practices.

Step 2 — Use of mechanical or physical methods to prevent problems

Step 3 — The application of approved materials.

Preventative Crop Pest Control Measures may include:

- Crop rotation
- Insect or rodent traps
- Frog ponds, bird houses or bat houses
- Resistant varieties
- Timing of planting
- Release of beneficial insects
- Companion planting and trap crops
- Physical removal and physical barriers

Preventative Weed Control Measures may include:

- Mowing and cultivation
- Crop rotation
- Crop spacing
- Use of mulches
- Hand or flame weeding
- Cover cropping

Preventative Disease Control Measures may include:

- Crop rotation
- Resistant varieties
- Limiting disease transmission
- Plant spacing
- Companion planting
- Soil solarization
- Non-synthetic biological, botanical, or mineral inputs
- Compost or compost tea use
- Field sanitation (removal of plant debris)
- Timing of planting or cultivation
- Timing and methods of irrigation

How are preventative practices evaluated?

Your organic management practices must be outlined in an organic system plan. This plan, which details all of your practices, including preventative, is updated at least once a year. During the inspection, the inspector will evaluate whether or not the practices outlined in the organic system plan have been implemented as described. The inspector will look for signs of preventative practices observable at inspection, such as row spacing or beneficial habit; as well as review the records of practices that were implemented but are no longer observable. For this reason it is important to keep clear records of what preventative practices you implement and when.

Records should be adapted to meet the needs of your particular business and therefore vary based on the complexity and scale of the farm. However, management records as simple as a field note book or a wall calendar tracking daily activities may prove sufficient.

Additional Resources

NOP Guide for Organic Crop Producers

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5101542>

Cooperative Extension: Preventative Practices in Organic Weed Management

<http://www.extension.org/pages/59489/preventative-practices-in-organic-weed-management#.VYBwflVikq>

Cooperative Extension: Fire Blight Control for Organic Orchards: Moving Beyond Antibiotics

<http://www.extension.org/pages/70541/fire-blight-control-for-organic-orchards:-moving-beyond-antibiotics#.VYBY2PIVhBc>

MOSES: Managing Pests & Diseases in an Organic Apple Orchard http://mosesorganic.org/wp-content/uploads/Publications/Fact_Sheets/32ManagingPestsinOrchard.pdf



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